

It is significant that such considerations were adduced, not by an economist, but by a minister. For the argument was ethical as well as economic, and, when Moore appealed to the precepts of traditional morality to bridle pecuniary interests, he provoked the retort that a judicious attention to pecuniary interests was an essential part of an enlightened morality. What the poor need for their spiritual health is to use the favourite catchword of the age—^{EC} regulation,¹ and regulation is possible only if they work under the eye of an employer. In the eyes of the austere moralists of the Restoration, the first, and most neglected, virtue of the poor is industry. Common rights encourage idleness by offering a precarious and demoralizing livelihood to men who ought to be at work for a master. It is not surprising, therefore, that the admonitions of religious teachers against the wickedness of joining house to house and field to field should almost entirely cease. Long the typical example of uncharitable covetousness, enclosure is now considered, not merely economically expedient, but morally beneficial. Baxter, with all his scrupulousness—partly, perhaps, because of his scrupulousness—differs from most earlier divines, in giving a qualified approval to enclosure "done in moderation by a pious man/¹ for the characteristic reason that a master can

establish a
moral discipline among his
employees, which they
would miss if they worked for
themselves* Whk
matters, in short, is not their
circumstances, but their
character. If they lose as peasants, they
will gain as
Christians. Opportunities for spiritual
edification are
more important than the mere material
environment
If only the material environment
were not itself
among the forces determining men's
capacity to be
edified

1

The temper which deplored that the
open-field
village was not a school of the severer
virtues turned
on pauperism and poor relief an even more
shattering